

Be Wild. Be Wonderful.



Healthcare

For years, healthcare providers have served as trusted sources for the latest health and wellness information. Patients of all ages entrust their health and well-being to the sound advice and direction of many health care professionals across their lifespan. Treating physical activity as an important “vital sign” within a patient’s electronic health record is an important development in preventative health care. Counseling patients regarding the role of physical activity in the prevention and treatment of disease is a key component of modern, high quality healthcare. By becoming more engaged in promoting physical activity via multi-sector collaborations, health care professionals extend their impact on the health of West Virginians regardless of age, disability, or economic status.

Strategies and Tactics

Priority Area 1: Structural Capacity

Priority Area 1 Strategy

Prioritize physical activity assessment, counseling, prescription, and referral in healthcare delivery.

Priority Area 1 Tactics

- 1 Integrate physical activity assessment into electronic medical records as a vital sign.
- 2 Form referral networks that link clinical practices to community-based physical activity opportunities and providers.
- 3 Integrate physical activity assessment and counseling best practices into medical school curricula for all healthcare providers in West Virginia higher education institutions.
- 4 Recommend measurement strategies to help patients develop and monitor their physical activity, such as wearable devices or smartphone applications.
- 5 Discuss physical activity as a “vital sign” with all patients and emphasize its importance for quality of life.

6	Encourage statewide healthcare organizations to recognize exemplary physically active clinicians and/or physical activity promoting healthcare systems.
7	Establish a repository of lifestyle management programs and physical activity resources that can be used for referrals for those with disabilities, chronic diseases, age-related limitations, or other limiting factors.
8	Invest in evidence-based programs that can be offered in the healthcare facility or community facility that provide physical activity opportunities for adults of all ages to manage pain, increase physical function, and improve their quality of life (i.e., Walk with a Doc, Fit and Strong!, EnhanceFitness, Walk With Ease, Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program).
9	Increase healthcare providers' patient counseling about the benefits of physical activity with particular attention paid to older adults and those with chronic diseases (i.e., arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, obesity) and encourage/prescribe walking programs.

Priority Area 2: Public Awareness and Social Marketing

Priority Area 2 Strategy

Engage health care systems and providers in promoting physical activity through clinical practice and community outreach.

Priority Area 2 Tactics

1	Develop mass media campaigns to promote public awareness of physical activity opportunities that are provided in or by the healthcare setting.
2	Educate patients on the health benefits of physical activity and the risks of a sedentary lifestyle, and encourage the promotion of physical activity participation that meets the needs of each individual.
3	Use contemporary social media assets to promote physical activity.
4	Access tools and resources provided by national healthcare organizations that provide guidance in promoting, educating, and prescribing physical activity (i.e., American College of Sports Medicine Exercise is Medicine).
5	Use social media outlets to make all West Virginia citizens aware of safe and accessible locations for physical activity throughout the state.
6	Create a state or local virtual resource guide with physical activity educational materials, motivational techniques and devices, and physical resources that are local and accessible to the surrounding population (i.e., local and state parks, community facilities and spaces).

Priority Area 3: Community Engagement and Environment

Priority Area 3 Strategy

Partner with other community groups and healthcare providers to minimize social and environmental barriers that hinder physical activity promotion.

Priority Area 3 Tactics

1

Encourage payers of healthcare to incentivize the use of community recreational centers/facilities where practical (ex. Silver Sneakers).

2

Support the capacity of school/child care campuses and programs (e.g., school-based health centers) to promote physical activity, including children and youth with special health care needs.

3

Encourage state and local healthcare facilities to improve their facilities/campuses to include places for physical activity.

4

Utilize the Community Health Needs Assessment process to determine community assets and weaknesses, and develop solutions and ways to engage with community members and collaborators (ex. local health departments, non-profits, etc.) to improve access to places to be physically active.

5

Identify high risk and underserved communities and populations that need low cost or free physical activity resources for increased inclusion.

6

Support local physical activity opportunities, such as 5K runs, paddle days, pickleball tournaments/leagues, community youth sports, etc.

7

Counsel older adults and others with chronic conditions to increase daily physical activity to manage pain, increase physical function, and improve their quality of life by utilizing available community-based programs and facilities.

Priority Area 4: Policy

Priority Area 4 Strategy

Support systems and policy changes that promote healthy lifestyles.

Priority Area 4 Tactics

1

Advocate for health care systems and clinicians to apply physical activity assessments and prescriptions as a required preventive health measure.

2

Identify current research and support increased research that identifies best practice for physical activity assessment, counseling, and promotion in healthcare settings.

3	Advocate for and adopt local policies in support of physical activity within clinics, hospitals, and workplaces.
4	Identify and acknowledge clinicians/healthcare systems that integrate physical activity assessment as a vital sign, provide physical activity prescriptions, and/or integrate objectively measured physical activity into clinical care.
5	Ensure that children and adolescents ages 3-17 will receive physical activity assessment and counseling by a healthcare provider at well child visits following current guidelines (e.g., AAP, FAAP-Bright Futures).
6	Ensure that older adults, particularly those with chronic conditions, will receive physical activity assessment and counseling by a healthcare provider and will be prescribed appropriate physical activity (e.g., walking programs).
7	Identify and acknowledge individual or group advocacy efforts and accomplishments related to physical activity promotion in the healthcare setting.

Priority Area 5: Multi-Sector Collaboration

Priority Area 5 Strategy	
Increase healthcare provider engagement in school and community-based initiatives that support physical activity.	

Priority Area 5 Tactics	
1	Increase the number of healthcare providers actively serving on local school wellness policy committees.
2	Partner with community physical activity providers to form referral networks to ensure equitable access to physical activity opportunities with a lens toward health equity.
3	Encourage school based health centers to promote physical activity and physical education and connect students and families with community programs and resources.
4	Establish partnerships with community groups, state government units, and other organizations to fund and implement physical activity policies and programs to underserved groups.
5	Ensure that universities, training programs, and professional societies are including basic physical activity education in healthcare professional training and additional professional development programs.
6	Support shared-use agreements among schools, faith-based organizations, communities and local recreation partners to share physical activity facilities and equipment.

7

Establish partnerships to provide evidence-based physical activity interventions for chronic disease management to improve quality of life for those suffering with chronic illnesses and other limiting health conditions.

8

Actively participate in multi-sector, collaborative policy and promotional efforts, including The Plan.